

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Friday, August 26, 2011**

## **Hundreds of Polisario Front Fighters Reportedly among Qaddafi's Mercenaries Arrested by Liberation Forces in Libya**

**Washington, DC** (August 26, 2011)— This week, following the largely complete take-over of Tripoli by the opposition forces of the Libyan National Transitional Council (NTC), new reports have surfaced that more than 500 of Moammar Qaddafi's mercenaries who were captured and arrested are members of the Polisario Front.

These reports follow earlier claims this Spring that the Polisario Front, an Algerian-backed separatist movement, was supplying fighters to Qaddafi's forces who were actively engaged in combat with US and NATO troops attempting to protect Libya's civilians. The Polisario has fought for decades with Morocco over the future of the Western Sahara.

According to these new reports, high-ranking NTC officials revealed that Polisario fighters were captured in Bab El Azizia, Qaddafi's military headquarters in Tripoli, and they intend to capture "the remaining Polisario elements still at-large in Libya."

**The new reports can be found at: <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=47816>**

"The growing evidence that members of the Polisario Front are aiding Qaddafi's forces who are fighting against US and NATO peacekeepers is outrageous and disturbing," said Ambassador (ret.) Edward M. Gabriel, President of the Moroccan American Center. "If these reports are true, the Polisario Front and any other groups that seek to destabilize the region—and threaten US interests and allies—must be held accountable by the international community for their actions."

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**The Moroccan American Center for Policy (MACP)** is a non-profit organization whose principal mission is to inform opinion makers, government officials and interested publics in the United States about political and social developments in Morocco and the role being played by the Kingdom of Morocco in broader strategic developments in North Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East. For more, please visit [www.moroccanamericanpolicy.org](http://www.moroccanamericanpolicy.org)

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Friday, August 5, 2011**

## **Secretary of State Clinton, Members of US Congress Voice Strong Support for Morocco's Democratic Reforms**

**Praise for Morocco's commitment to human rights, increased freedom and equality, and participatory democracy**

**Washington, DC** (August 5)—Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Members of Congress voiced congratulations and strong support for Morocco's new Constitution, which strengthens and advances the country's commitment to human rights, freedom and equality, participatory democracy and governance.

In her congratulatory message marking Morocco's July 30<sup>th</sup> National Day, Secretary Clinton expressed the United States' support "during this time of profound change in the Middle East and North Africa" for Morocco's "efforts to strengthen the rule of law, human rights and good governance." She called Morocco's peaceful July 1 referendum approving its new Constitution "an important step toward democratic reform" and said "Morocco is a longstanding friend, partner, and ally of the United States."

A letter from Congress to His Majesty King Mohammed VI this week called Morocco's vote for Constitutional reforms an "important milestone" and applauded "the new liberties brought forth by the new National Council of Human Rights (CNDH) which include gender equality, the rights of children and young people, the rights of vulnerable groups, and the oversight and coordination of a national plan to promote human rights." The letter — signed by Reps. Steve Cohen (D-TN), Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL), Gary Ackerman (D-NY), Michael Grimm (R-NY), Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX), Billy Long (R-MO), James Moran (D-VA), Christopher Murphy (D-CT), Charles Rangel (D-NY), Dennis Ross (R-FL), Loretta Sanchez (D-CA), and Heath Shuler (D-NC), — said the July 1 referendum was "a more democratic and humanitarian way to serve the citizens" of Morocco, and "a considerable step toward meeting the political desires and social freedoms of your citizens."

In her July 29<sup>th</sup> Congressional Record remarks, Rep. Jackson Lee noted that Morocco has remained peaceful in the Arab Spring turmoil and urged continued US support for a strong ally as it continues on the reform path. "Today," she said, "with chaos and conflict spreading in North Africa and the Middle East, it is important that the United States recognize and encourage those countries that share our democratic values and support reforms so badly needed in the region. There is no better friend and ally for America in North Africa than the Kingdom of Morocco." Jackson Lee said Morocco should be applauded for "its continuing reform process and desire to improve the lives of all Moroccans, including the Western Sahara."

**For a copy of the letter to King Mohammed VI from the Members of Congress, go to:**

<http://www.moroccanamericanpolicy.org/upload/media/Letter%20from%20Congress%20Members%20on%20Morocco%20Constitutional%20Reforms%208-4-11.pdf>

**For FAQs on Morocco's new Constitutional reforms, go to:**

[http://www.moroccanamericanpolicy.org/upload/media/FS\\_Election%20Results%208July11wMap.pdf](http://www.moroccanamericanpolicy.org/upload/media/FS_Election%20Results%208July11wMap.pdf)

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